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Latinos hit hardest among COVID-19 positives in BRHD; 99 total cases reported over 3 days

By Herald Journal staff
Jun 1, 2020

BRHD COVID-19 report, June 1, 2020

Race/Ethnicity	% of Total Population	Case Count	% of Cases
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.8%	4	1.61%
Asian	1.5%	22	8.84%
Black or African American	0.7%	16	6.43%
Hispanic or Latino	9.6%	102	40.96%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%	6	2.41%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	83.7%	55	22.09%
Other Race	3.5%	27	10.84%
Unknown		10	4.02%
(blank)		7	2.81%

The Bear River Health Department confirmed 19 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, following 80 new cases over the weekend, and new demographic data shows Latinos with nearly double the number of confirmed cases of any other ethnicity.

The department reported 38 new cases Saturday and 42 new cases Sunday. Monday's increase brings the total number of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 to 267 in the three-county district.

BRHD included race and ethnicity data in its report for the first time Monday, showing virus positives disproportionately high among minorities. The highest number of cases was among Latino residents, with 102 positives, or about 41% of the district's confirmed cases, even though they make up less than 10% of district residents. The next highest number of cases was among Caucasian residents, with 55 cases, making 22% of the district's total but making up nearly 84% of district residents. Twenty-two Asian residents and 16 black residents tested positive. Forty-four results were reported as "other race," "unknown" or "(blank)." A lag in reporting means the race and ethnicity data is from when there were only 249 cases in the district.

BRHD would not comment on rumors of outbreaks at local factories, but stated Friday that “targeted tests” at some locations at “critical industries” had been planned over the next few days in an effort to protect essential employees but keep those industries operating.

Nearly all of the new cases in the district are in Cache County. There have been 29 confirmed cases in Box Elder, 20 of which are considered recovered. Rich, the other county in the district, is still reporting zero cases.

Across the Idaho border, Franklin County is now reporting two confirmed cases and Bear Lake and Oneida counties are still reporting zero.

Almost all of BRHD’s new cases have been in people aged 18-60. Of the district’s 267 cases, 219 have been in that age range, 18 have been in minors and 30 have been in seniors.

While the number of cases has doubled in a little more than a week, BRHD is still reporting that only 10 people have been hospitalized due to the coronavirus. BRHD considers 78 of those cases recovered, meaning people who have been “at least 3 days fever free without the use of medication, have improvement in respiratory symptoms, and 10 days must have passed since symptoms first appeared.”

The rapid increase in confirmed cases comes about after Utah has relaxed social distancing guidelines and as testing capacity increases so health officials are better able to identify where the virus has been spreading in Cache Valley.

“As large numbers of individuals are tested, we anticipate an increase in positive cases,” the department states.

When individuals test positive for COVID-19, they are temporarily removed from workplaces and isolated. BRHD’s epidemiology team investigates, working to identify anyone else there’s a significant chance the patient exposed to the virus.

The cumulative confirmed cases in Utah overall reached 9,999 on Monday, an increase of about 200 since Friday. More than 218,000 people have been tested in the state, up nearly 4,200 from Sunday. Ninety-five positive cases are currently hospitalized, according to the state health department, and 113 deaths have been attributed to the virus among Utah residents.

Using a different criteria than BRHD, the state counts nearly 6,300 of its cases as recovered. “A case with a diagnosis date of more than three weeks ago, who has not passed away, is considered recovered” by the Utah Department of Health.

Health officials recommend social distancing precautions to help avoid contracting or spreading the virus, including avoiding large gatherings, avoiding going within 6 feet of someone outside your household, and wearing a mask at times when close contact likely can’t be avoided, such as grocery

shopping.

For more information, visit brhd.org/coronavirus.